programmes and deepening the democratic process etc.

2. While the number of militants killed in June this year is higher than that of May, it is not possible to make an immediate assessment of the overall results of the policy. The Kashmir militancy is sponsored, aided and abetted by Pakistan, and thus it requires sustained and systematic efforts to tackle it.

Visit of Home Minister to Jammu and Kashmir

4637. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he again paid a visit to the terrorist hit areas of Jammu following the cold blooded murder of 25 or more persons belonging to two marriage parties;

(b) what were the main observations of his team and what relief has so far been paid to the families of victims;

(c) the number of persons including women, children killed at the hands of militants in Jammu and Kashmir during the period since March, 1998, indicating the details of the incidents of militancy, and the number of militants killed or apprehended in connection therewith; and

(d) what effective steps have been and are being taken to deal with militants including foreign mercenaries engaged in militancy and related activities?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During their visit to Chapnari and Prem Nagar (both located within a short distance of Doda), the Home Minister and Officers accompanying him interacted with members of public available at the spot including survivors of the incident and members of the victim families. The Home Minister expressed his concern at such incidents and sympathy for the survivors. He also assured them that efforts are being made to ensure their security. Exgratia relief is paid to the families of the victims by the State Government as per standard norms fixed by them.

(c) The number of civilians killed during the period from 1st March 1998 to 15th July, 1998 is 337. Some of the major incidents perpetrated by the militants recently include killing of 26 persons at Parankot and Dhakikot villages in Distt. Udhampur on 17/18 April, 1998, killing of 9 persons in Doda and 4 persons in Surankot in Poonch District between May 4-6, 1998 and killing 25 persons of marriage parties in Chapnari village of Doda District on 19th June, 1998. As informed by the State Government, total number of incidents of militancy from 1st March, 1998 to 15th July, 1998 have been 1068. During this period 280 militants were killed and 403 apprehended.

(d) Intensive anti-militancy operations are being undertaken. The security forces/States Police have been redeployed at the strategic places to instill confidence in the people in the vulnerable areas. Close vigil is also being kept by the Security Forces and the intelligence agencies along the border/LOC and in the interior areas. System of Village Defence Committee is being strengthened.

Creation of Ministry of Border Security in Gujarat

4638. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Gujarat has caused a direct infringement on the domain of the Central Government by creating a Ministry of Border Security in the State as the Centre has the sole constitutional authority to provide security to the country's frontiers; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government on this extraordinary development in Gujarat?